

bloated bureaucracy called the Federal Government.

Here we are, trying to protect taxpayers of our States who are stretched to the gills in terms of what they have to pay not only in Federal but State or sales—you name it—or real estate taxes that roll up and consume so much of everybody's weekly pay.

The least we can do—while we need to make major fixes to our fiscal problems here—is take those that have been identified by legitimate neutral organizations—inspectors general of the United States, various agencies—bring those to light, and then do something about it and not just come down here and make a chart and add some red ink, but actually introduce legislation, which I am trying to do on some of these pieces so that we can remedy this problem.

So meanwhile we have an administration here that has refused over and over to sit down and work out a long-term fiscal debt reduction program, which this country desperately needs because the debt clock is still ticking away like crazy.

If you want to see it, go to my Web site at coats.senate.gov. We have the clock right there. We haven't talked about it much down here lately. We made a big push earlier. Too many people have thrown up their hands and said that under this administration it is not going to happen. That probably is right. But the least we can do then, until we get new management in the White House, is to find these issues of waste, fraud, and abuse, and do something about it now. So that is what we are trying to do.

I look forward to being back here next week with the latest edition of "Waste of the Week."

I thank my colleague from Maine for her patience.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASIDY). The Senator from Rhode Island.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, the Senator from Maine is about to speak I believe on the Older Americans Act.

While she is here on the floor, I wish to take a moment to express my personal appreciation to her and to Chairman ALEXANDER for an issue that arose during the course of the Older Americans Act.

I have a very strong concern that older Americans, particularly as they approach the end of their lives, are not getting their wishes honored. In fact, very often nobody even knows what their wishes are about how they would like to be treated at the end of their lives. Do they want to be at home? Do they not particularly care about using all the medical apparatuses available to them? Do they want to be in the hospital and have everybody take every available measure? That should be their choice. It should be an in-

formed choice and a choice that we should honor.

I sought language within the Older Americans Act to try to empower that. There were difficulties with it, and those difficulties were resolved by the willingness of Chairman ALEXANDER to ask Chairman COLLINS to hold a hearing on this subject in the Select Committee on Aging and for all of the chairmen and ranking members on the two committees to send a letter to the Government Accountability Office to lay out the case and put a factual brief before us for that hearing.

This would not have happened without the courtesy of Senator COLLINS. This is an aging committee thing that she has been willing to do to resolve an issue that actually started in the HELP Committee. It was very gracious of her. She has been a leader on these end-of-life issues for a long time. I didn't want to miss this chance to express my appreciation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before the Senator from Rhode Island leaves the floor, let me thank him for his kind comments. I have enjoyed working with him on issues such as hospice care and advanced planning. I know these issues are very important to him, as they are to me. I am happy we are able to collaborate on a GAO request and also on a hearing later this year.

So I thank him for his efforts in resolving this issue so that the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act could go forward.

EVERY CHILD ACHIEVES ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, before I begin my comments on the Older Americans Act, I do want to add to the accolades that have been given today to the chairman and the ranking member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, on which I am pleased to serve.

They have worked as a team, providing tremendous leadership that brought us to a tremendous accomplishment today, and that is the passage of the Every Child Achieves Act. It would not have happened without the extraordinary leadership of Chairman ALEXANDER and Senator MURRAY, the ranking minority member. I thank them for their hard work in this regard.

OLDER AMERICANS ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, as the chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging and as the cosponsor of the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, I also commend the chairman and the ranking member of the HELP Committee for their hard work over the past 2 years in developing a bipartisan consensus bill to reauthorize and strengthen the Older Americans Act. It is my hope that the

Senate later today will unanimously pass this important legislation.

The programs authorized by the Older Americans Act are tremendously important in the State of Maine and across the country. Maine is the oldest State by median age in the entire country. Probably, if I asked most of my colleagues, they would guess it was Florida, but in fact it is the State of Maine.

Maine's network of five area agencies on aging provides invaluable supports and services to more than 100,000 seniors living in my State.

In just the past few months, I have received almost 700 letters from seniors across Maine urging that we pass the reauthorization bill. I look forward to letting my constituents know that the Senate soon will do just that.

While funding has been provided on a continuing basis through the appropriations process, the fact is that legislation reauthorizing the Older Americans Act is long overdue. The authorization expired in 2011.

It is particularly significant that the Senate pass this legislation this month, for July marks the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act.

This law funds critical services in communities across our Nation that help to keep our older adults healthy and independent. Its funding supports some of the most vital and successful Federal programs for our Nation's seniors.

Nearly 12 million older Americans receive services through this law, such services as Meals on Wheels, senior centers, transportation, legal services, and caregiver support.

Moreover, these programs are operated through a national network of area agencies on aging that stresses local decisionmaking regarding what services are most needed for older adults in a particular community. It is a flexible program that allows local needs to be met.

Older Americans Act programs also help to relieve the financial pressure on the Medicare and Medicaid Programs, because they help seniors to stay healthy, independent, and living right where they want to be—in the comfort, security, and privacy of their own homes.

AARP's surveys consistently reflect the fact that aging in place is the preferred option for seniors who want to continue to live independently and avoid expensive nursing home and other institutionalized care as long as possible.

This bill also includes important provisions to strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program and to help protect our vulnerable seniors from financial exploitation and abuse. Financial exploitation of our seniors is a growing epidemic that cost them an estimated \$2.9 billion in 2010. It is so disturbing that in 90 percent of these cases, the financial exploitation abuse is perpetrated by a family member, a trusted individual, a caregiver—someone whom the senior knows well. The